

sufficient and adequate causation of the specific cancer”.

The next procedural step will be the decree by which the Court of Appeal will accept or reject the evidence submitted by the panel. In the Italian legal system the latter event is rare.

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PM: “We agree that our brands cause lung cancer in smokers”

Following an article I published in an Australian newspaper in April, I received a letter from Philip Morris Australia’s spin king Thomas Dubois, scolding me for not drawing readers’ attentions to the company’s latest website position on disease causation and smoking. I replied: “Many of my colleagues understand the message on your website to mean that Philip Morris agrees with the fact that there is overwhelming consensus in the medical and scientific community that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer and other diseases. However, we believe that this is no different to (for example) the backpacker serial killer Ivan Milat saying, with hand on his heart, that he agrees that there exists an overwhelming consensus of evidence that he killed seven young people. This of course does not preclude him continuing to say, ‘I am innocent of murder’. All he’s doing is acknowledging that this consensus exists, just as PM is acknowledging the consensus about smoking and health among scientists.

“So, to cut to the chase, without recourse to the shelter provided by your company’s frankly robotic ‘desire for a single, consistent public health message’ (you’re all told to put this in these sort of letters, right?) would you please answer “yes” or “no” to the following question: ‘Does Philip Morris agree that cigarettes manufactured and sold by Philip Morris cause lung cancer in many of those who smoke them?’”

Back came his reply: “In response to your e-mail dated May 2, our answer is

as follows: ‘Yes, we agree that smoking cigarettes, including our brands, causes lung cancer and other serious diseases in smokers.’”

This seems to be yet another layer of the onion that has been removed from the game that British American Tobacco’s Australian chairman in 1997 once described as “a charade”. So what does it mean? Philip Morris and all tobacco companies continue to dispute each and every litigant’s claim on just that: that smoking their company’s brands caused lung cancer or other serious diseases in a particular smoker. Yes, they agree smoking their brands can cause cancer in smokers . . . it’s just that they’ve never found a single instance where they agreed that this ever occurred! Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.

SIMON CHAPMAN
Editor, Tobacco Control

Europe: Rodin’s non-thinker

Just like CASIN (see “The Circumlocution Hall of Fame” below), the Belgian Rodin Foundation, whose strapline is “Analysing and taking action”, has been contacting health agencies active in tobacco control as if it had no connections with the tobacco industry. Its unctuous approaches even included a disarming if coy plea for us to make allowances for the institutional equivalent of the innocence of youth. In a letter sent to several organisations in Europe, the following explanation was provided. “We are a very young organisation and our activities have just started. We are based in Brussels and are funded by public and private funds.” In fact the Rodin Foundation has a contract with the tobacco manufacturers in the Belgian market and will receive 1.85 million Euros (US\$1.75 million) annually over five years. Any hint of this funding was strikingly absent in the letter. The foundation says it is in favour of the more “gentle” approach to tobacco control. As it stated: “Current responses are of types such as prohibition, stigmatisation of users and those around them, control measures, penalties, social exclusion, etc, while measures of assistance, support, assumption of responsibility, treatment and rehabilitation, as much as they do exist, receive much less and increasingly piecemeal attention and resources.” Any resemblance to the “responsible” Philip Morris approach is, well, not entirely coincidental.

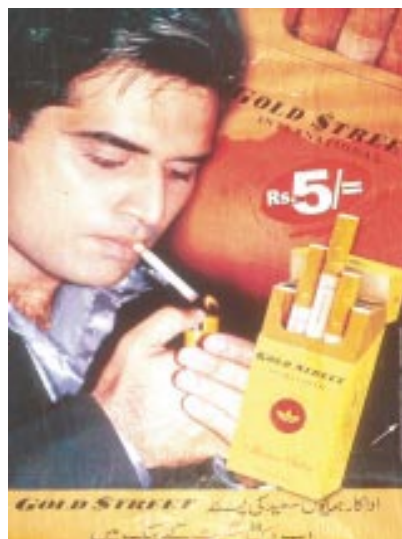
The Rodin letter continued: “For the time being, we are creating a database on all national and international prevention projects, more specifically primary prevention and especially tobacco prevention among youngsters. The purpose of this scientific research is to give scientific support to other organisations and federate [sic] initiatives that fall within the scope of its objectives and raise awareness among politicians.” Slight overuse of the word “scientific” there, one might think, presumably dictated by the urgent need to win the confidence of the letter’s recipients that their replies would be handled in a way that was at once responsible and beneficial to mankind. No prizes for predicting that the science would be carried out according to the tobacco industry’s standards, and that the principal activities may closely resemble the well known and totally inefficient youth prevention campaigns favoured by the big tobacco pushers.

South Asia: the party goes on

As we know, international tobacco companies are hard at work to reinvent their images, particularly in the west where people increasingly disapprove of their activities. At the same time, as we also know, their behaviour in the new markets of the developing world has not changed one iota, except perhaps to intensify with each passing month.

Pakistan has already been suffering a sustained onslaught of tobacco promotion clearly aimed at youth for many years (see *Tobacco Control* 2001;10:93–4 and *Tobacco Control* 2000;9:361, for examples). Have the international tobacco companies toned down their marketing recently, in line with the new sense of corporate responsibility they claim? Did they, as perhaps only a hopeless idealist might wonder, think it better corporate ethics to reduce their barrage of positive images for cigarettes in view of the nail biting, nuclear clouded tension over Pakistan’s dispute with neighbouring India over Kashmir, or its struggle to house refugees fleeing from war torn Afghanistan? Of course we know the answer: absolutely no change at all.

Increasingly, as in other parts of the region, tobacco companies are reaching Pakistan’s adolescents via their heroes. Take Said, for example, a tall, handsome television and film actor, adored by girls and sure to pull a crowd—a very young crowd—



BAT has enlisted TV star Said to promote its Gold Street brand in Pakistan.

wherever he goes. He is known to millions through his starring role in one of the country's most popular television drama series. What a catch, then, for British American Tobacco (BAT), whose Gold Street cigarettes he has been helping to promote. Interestingly, the brand bears a remarkable resemblance to the colours and design of the company's Benson & Hedges brand, using the same gold background together with a similar font for the name. And in keeping with the international companies' use of western references to present an upmarket



Philip Morris ads for its Red and White brand, which appeared in the Pakistan sports journal *The Cricketer*—a popular magazine for teenage boys.



Marlboro promotional campaign advertisements in Sri Lanka, in which entrants could win a classic American car.

image, everything on a Gold Street pack is in English—except for the Urdu health warning.

Not to be outdone, Red and White brand, made by a Philip Morris subsidiary, has run ads featuring a veritable Alladin's cave of desirable consumer goods to tempt the would-be upwardly mobile—a sleek BMW sports car, ultra slim laptop computers and mobile telephones, as well as the ubiquitous cigarette lighters—all to be won in a promotion in February. Ads appeared in journals such as *The Cricketer*, which covers the country's most popular sport, whose most ardent fans are teenage boys. No doubt Philip Morris would say that it was only targeting “young adults” who are, of course, fully informed about the risks of smoking. They could even point to the health warnings on the promotional ads, situated in the bottom left-hand corner of the ad shown here. Even in the original, it is so small as to be almost illegible.

Later in the year, to capitalise on World Cup soccer fever, Diplomat brand, also from Philip Morris, linked itself to the familiar range of toys for boys. In addition, for the three luckiest winners, there was a whole kilogram of gold, not just your regular ingot, but a model of the World Cup soccer

stadium, cheekily embossed with the brand's name, though executed, like the concept of the promotion, with scant regard for taste.

Elsewhere in South Asia, too, the high tide of tobacco advertising has shown no signs of receding. In Sri Lanka, Philip Morris used a new trick in this region, attempting to exploit some of the most familiar, Hollywood friendly icons of grass roots American culture. In a colourful Marlboro promotion, entrants stood to win one of five classic American cars, an original Wurlitzer jukebox, the ubiquitous travel bag, or a “classic American” Zippo lighter.

Togo: mobile frenzy as Bond goes in for the kill

For most people in West Africa, the thought of owning any sort of hi-tech luxury goods is little more than a pipe-dream. A competition to win one of 50 mobile telephones, complete with an initial call charge credit, was therefore bound to be a hit in Togo, a small country wedged between Ghana and Benin above the Gulf of Guinea, where a mobile telephone costs more than a third of the average annual per capita gross domestic product.

Earlier this year Godfrey Philips, a subsidiary of ever crafty Philip Morris, came up with a promotion for its Bond Street cigarette brand, which exploited a popular misunderstanding. The name Bond has near legendary status among children, even those who do not attend school, thanks to the popularity of the James Bond adventure movies. His special agent's number 007 is to be found everywhere, especially on children's toys. Apparently, many children mistakenly believe that anything called Bond is associated with their hero.

Just as Bond the agent always gets the girl, played by an actress who was somewhat easy on the eye, so Bond Street the cigarette ran ads showing young men looking so happy, they must have just won either a phone, or the affections of the glamorous young woman beside them, or possibly both. As with 007's women, the models in the ads looked European, not African, just as many other African tobacco ads feature Americans or Europeans.

Entry to the draw was simple, and all over the country people rushed to buy the required pack of Bond Street. Entrants were not just the young people who seem to have been the